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Dr. PETTER's

SERMON,

Preached before the

Honourable SOCIETY

OF THE

County of KENT,

Novemb. 17. 1698.

Veneris xviii *die Novemb.* 1698.

IT is Ordered at a *General Meeting* of the Stewards for the SOCIETY of the County of *Kent*, That their hearty Thanks be given to Dr. *Petter*, for his Sermon Preached on the 17th Inſtant, at St. *Mary le Bow*; and that He be deſired to Print the ſame.

Robert Rowland, Treaſurer.

A

SERMON,

Preach'd before the

Honourable SOCIETY

OF THE

NATIVES

OF THE

County of *KENT*,

Novemb. the 17*th.* 1698.

At St. *Mary le Bow*, *LONDON.*

By *John Petter*, D. D. Rector of *Greens-Norton*, in *Northamptonshire*, and Chaplain to her late Majesties Regiment of Horse, Commanded by the Honourable Major-General *Lumley*.

LONDON,

Printed by J. Dawks, for J. Back, (Bookseller to the said Honourable Society,) at the *Black-Boy* on *London-Bridge*, 1698.

TO MY MUCH

Esteemed *Country-Men*,

Mr. { *Robert Rowland.*
William Baker.
John Pettet.
Edward Stephens.
William Pemble.
Samuel Broughton. }

Mr. { *Matthew Tong.*
Thomas Austen.
Robert Smith.
Richard Watts.
Richard Cooke.
Peter Weston. }

STEWARDS

OF THE

Kentish-Feast.

Gentlemen,

YOur great readiness to do the utmost to make the Honourable Society *of your County, both Lasting and Useful, was a sufficient Motive to me to contribute all*

all in my Power, to promote ſo Generous and ſo good a Deſign; and that this following Diſcourſe, Preach'd before the ſame, and now made Publick at your Requeſt, may produce theſe Effects, is the hearty Wiſh of him who will gladly Embrace any Opportunity of advancing the Honour and Welfare of our County, and of convincing you with how much Sincerity and Reſpect he is,

Gentlemen,

Your Faithful Friend, Affectionate Countryman, and Humble Servant.

John Petter.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

Kentiſh-Feaſt.

Eſay XXXII. 8.

But the liberal man deviſeth liberal things, and by liberal things he ſhall ſtand.

THE Verſe which I have choſe for my Text, contains the Character and Reward of the Liberal Man, and ends with that part of the Chapter taken up in Prophetick Expreſſions of a new Government, wherein Virtue ſhould be exalted and Piety ſo cheriſh'd and careſs'd by the Favour and Countenance of the Prince, that ſuch Men alone as were diſtinguiſhable by the rectitude and integrity of their Principles and Actions, ſhould be advanc'd to Places of Dignity and Honour; that none but Miniſters ſo qualified ſhould ſit at the Helm, or adminiſter Juſtice to the People; and this News was ſo much the more joyfully receiv'd, and had this Advantage on its ſide, to render it acceptable and welcom, That it was predicted in *Ahaz* his time, it had his unjuſt Reign for a

Foyl, to bring ſome new acceſſion of Satisfaction to the whole Nation; it then felt, very ſenſibly felt and ſmarted under the Iniquity and Injuſtice of thoſe who were rais'd to, and ſet up in Places of Honor and Truſt, and for the Adminiſtration of Juſtice: And it was then, as the Rabbines and Commentators on this Chapter tell us, that the Prophet very ſeaſonably, very compaſſionately rais'd the Spirits of the Oppreſſed, by foretelling them the happineſs of the ſtate they ſhould ſoon be in, by intimating to them the Government of the Righteous *Hezekiah*, who was to ſucceed his Father *Ahaz*, and that after the Deſeat of *Senacherib*, King of *Aſſyria*, the Government ſhould be ſo Eſtabliſh'd, That Juſtice ſhould thenceforth flow down like a River, that the Poor and Oppreſſed ſhould be reliev'd and refreſh'd, which the Prophet expreſſes in ſuch Similitude and Elegancy, in ſuch Metaphors and Schemes, and Beauties of Speech, as are convincing to ſhew, that plainneſs of Language was not ſufficient to ſet off the energy and life of his Thoughts on this Occaſion; and ſo you have it in the ſecond verſe of this Chapter, *And a man ſhall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt, as Rivers of waters in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land:* And after this he repreſents the happy ſtate of Religion and Virtue, as if this change of Government ſhould new model the very Minds of the People; ſo that the blind and inconſiderate, thoſe who were unwilling to underſtand their own Duty, or to hearken to any Precepts concerning it, ſhould be diſpos'd to receive Inſtruction and new Impreſſions of Piety and Goodneſs: And in the next place, he very artfully, very rhetorically ſets off the Liberal Man, by comparing him with the vile Man and the Churle, that is (as Expoſitors agree, and as it appears by the compariſon of them with the Liberal Man) the Niggard or Covetous Wretches; to ſet the Liberal Man in a true light, to draw his Picture the more beautifully, he ſets it off with ſhadows,

even

even with the blackneſs of the Characters of the vile perſon and Churle, and adds, That in the new model'd ſtate, they ſhould not be encourag'd, they ſhould not be ceremoniouſly flatter'd nor ſooth'd by the Name and Character of Liberal Men, as they were in the former Reign, and his Reaſon is very good, becauſe whatever ſhew and colour of Religion and Juſtice they make, they contrive *to make empty the Soul of the Hungry, and to make the drink of the Thirſty to fail:* And again, *their Inſtruments are Evil, and they deviſe wicked Devices to deſtroy the Poor*, &c. *But the liberal man deviſeth liberal things, and by liberal things he ſhall ſtand.* But as the Kings that reigned in Righteouſneſs under the Law, ſhadowed forth Chriſt, the King of Peace, ſo the Virtues then recommended, had a peculiar tendency and reſpect to thoſe of the Goſpel; they were lame and imperfect till they grew up by degrees, 'till they were heightned and ſpiritualiz'd, and arrived at perfect Maturity under the Oeconomy of the Goſpel; 'till Men, after ſome Ages of Inſtruction and Diſcipline, were refin'd and come up to the meaſure of the fulneſs of the ſtature of Chriſt: Then *Liberality* wore the Name of *Charity* and the liberal and merciful Man was to receive Mercy. To do right therefore to the Text, in the ſence of the and Law Goſpel, as well as to the Occaſion of this preſent Aſſembly.

I ſhall ſhew, *Firſt*, what Obligations lye on us all to be Liberal and Charitable.

Secondly, How advantagious and neceſſary it is that perſons of Rank and Quality, and Fortune, ſhould diſtinguiſh themſelves in this reſpect.

Thirdly, What a vaſt Improvement of this Grace it is to deviſe Liberal Things, by entring into *SOCIETIES.*

Fourthly and *Laſtly*, The Reward of the Liberal Man, *by liberal things he ſhall ſtand*; or, in the Goſpel ſence, *the merciful man ſhall receive mercy.*

But before I ſpeak to theſe Particulars, I think it may not be improper to premiſe theſe two things:

1ſt. To ſhew what *Liberality* is.

2dly. What it is to deviſe *Liberal Things*.

Now *Liberality* is a Communication of what we have to others, either for the benefit of their Souls or Bodies, or both.

2dly. To deviſe *Liberal Things*, is to ſtudy and conſider what *Liberality* is, and what *Liberal Things* are to be done, and to conclude that we will do them; for thus much the Original Word ſignifies, it denoting Counſel and Deliberation, and Concluſion upon Premiſſes.

Having thus laid down theſe things, I ſhall proceed to ſpeak to the Particulars before-mentioned, and ſhew,

1. What Obligations lye on us all to be *Liberal* and *Charitable*; and this we are oblig'd to,

Firſt, From Inſtinct and meer animal Motion.

Secondly, From Reaſon.

Thirdly, From Revelation.

Fourthly, From the Example of Chriſt.

1ſt. We are oblig'd to be *Charitable* from Inſtinct and meer animal Motion.

Pity and Compaſſion are ſo interwoven with our temper and conſtitution, that Nature muſt ſuffer no ſmall violence to diveſt it ſelf of the native ſoftneſs with which it was born; when we ſee our Brother in diſtreſs and in labour, we naturally ſympathize, as if we would leſſen the burthen, by dividing the weight and bearing a ſhare in it. I can't ſay whether our tenderneſs can eaſily reſiſt, ſure I am, uncorrupted Nature can't but be touch'd and mov'd when ſuch Objects preſent themſelves, it ſeems to be made to go Mechanically, like ſome Machines, that move the better by the greater weight: when we ſee Humanity and our own Nature

ture ſinking under the preſſure, 'tis but relieving our ſelves to help and raiſe it up; we our ſelves ſuffer in Effigie, we riſe and ſpring againſt the weight, and are mightily eas'd at the unburthening of another. We are impelled by an inborn deſire of bringing Nature to the Primitive Level, and as we feel a certain pleaſure at the lowering of the proud and haughty, perhaps, becauſe they arrogate and uſurp Superiority, and get ſo very much beyond the equality of ſtate wherein we were created; ſo are we in trouble and diſtreſs at the ſinking of others ſo much below that level and condition; ſo that to ſuccour thoſe that are in Want, to feed the Hungry, and cloath the Naked, is to redeem them from the Miſeries the Fall of *Adam* has plung'd them into; 'tis in a manner to re-eſtabliſh them in their Original ſtate, 'tis as much as in us lies, to take away all Wants, Infirmities and Diſeaſes, and to induce a ſort of Immunity from them; 'tis exempting for a time from Death here, as a certain pledge and earneſt of an Immortality hereafter. And if we are carried by a natural impulſe, and deſire to propagate our Kind, and to love and fancy what we have, as it were thus created. Is it not a God-like action, to preſerve and ſupport this Species and Image of God and our ſelves, and to love and admire the Mirror and Similitude of our own Natures? this is a ſort of ſelfiſhneſs, it naturally ariſes from the affection we bear to our ſelves, 'tis gratifying our own Inclinations, 'tis aſpiring after Immortality, and deſiring to perpetuate our own being in ſome moving Image, and to live ſtill in the Perſons of others; and this principle is ſo common, that I venture to ſay, we are acted and moved by it as meer Animals. Children, e're they arrive at maturity, e're their weak glimmering light of Reaſon can direct them, e're they grow up to the age and capacity of Inſtruction, before they can imbibe the rudiments of their Duty, are touch'd with a ſenſe of Miſery, and ſeem to be tenderly and compaſſionately affected: When they breath only the life of Animals,

Animals, they ſeem to be grated on, and offended at the Miſeries and Pains of another, and their ſpirits and tender parts ſeem to feel more ſenſibly, to receive the impreſſion more eaſily than others: and perhaps for the ſame reaſon that Women, whoſe Blood is more purified, and conſequently their Spirits more refin'd and more active than thoſe of Men, are more capable of Compaſſion and Pity; and I doubt not to ſay, that as theſe Paſſions and Affections are real, not only the ſhadows of ſuch affections in theſe, neither are they only ſuch in Children, or other Animals. But

Secondly, When our Spirits grow ſtrong enough to bear up the weighty Thoughts of Reaſon and Goodneſs, when they have learn'd to perform their functions readily, and to run in their Channels eaſily, and when we are inſtructed to make reflections clearly, then the ſenſe of having done good, of having anſwered the end of our Creation, and acted according to the good inclinations planted in our Natures, is a perpetual entertainment to us; a pleaſure not like that of the Body, which is groſs and heavy, this indeed may tickle the Fibres and endings of the Nerves, the conveyers of Senſation, but we muſt at length proceed to a dull repetition of the ſame things, and then they become flat and familiar, and can't ſurprize nor ſooth any more; our ſenſories are wearied with the active pleaſure, and then they require their refreſhment and motion of reſtitution; but the pleaſure of the Mind is a pleaſure that never cloys, 'tis like that of Heaven, that is manly and rational, and laſting too; for that that pleaſes true Reaſon once, pleaſes it for ever, there is that ſatisfaction, delight, and content in the review, and memory of good actions; there is that harmony, proportion, and beauty in them as they are govern'd by right reaſon, that we cannot but approve the fair picture, we cannot but caſt ſome glances of Honour on our ſelves, for having acted according to the dictates and directions of our moſt refined faculties, and divine principles; and this pleaſure is as much tranſcending

ſcending that of the Body, as Reaſon is above Senſe, or Man Superior to a Beaſt; and our complacency in, and love of this beauty of Holineſs is as inſeparable from us, as the love of Reaſon, or Wiſdom, or of any other perfection; and this ſatisfaction is ſo natural, that a Man may as ſoon quit his Nature and Reaſon, as be diſpleas'd with any of theſe beauties of the Mind; and the more we view them, the more we love them; and the more we love them, the more we delight in them; and the more we are delighted in them, the more frequent are we in viewing, and in loving, and in being delighted anew: And this chearfulneſs of the Mind, like that of Heaven has a very propitious influence on our lower Nature, on the Earth and Body we wear; the complacency of the Mind keeps the Spirits in an uniform, regular motion, and our pleaſure like that of Health, is calm and ſweet: But when this Heaven within us reflects on us more favourably, when it ſhines more ſerene and clear, the very Body receives new warmth and vigour, the Spirits ſwell up, and flow more briskly, the Blood is exalted and purified by this new heat and motion, and the whole Man ſhines with a freſh Air and Gayety, the Body is ſo cloſely tackt to the Mind, that they immediately affect each other, and the Mind draws up a Contagion and Vapour from our lower Nature that mightily diſturbs it, and when the diſorder and diſeaſe of the Body riſes higher, and does diſcompoſe the upper Man, and when the Diſtemper and Paſſions of it does overcaſt and darken our Reaſon and Underſtanding, the Mind returns the Malignity in an ill aſpect on the Body, as the Vapour and Venom exhal'd in ſome Climates from an unwholeſome Soil, falls again in deadly Showers upon it. In ſhort, the Body looks freſh or withered, gay and lively, or dull and unactive, as the Mind ſhines or lowrs upon it. So that the approbation of the Spirit does chear and quicken the Body, it communicates new Life and motion to it: Since therefore we are carried by inſtinct, and by our meer animal

mal motion and tendency to Compaſſion and Pity, or to raiſe and aſſiſt our own drooping Natures in the Perſons of others, as I have ſhewn, and that beſides this Inclination and Byaſs impreſs'd upon us, we have the dictate of reaſon, and the chearful reflection of the Mind, which ſpreading new pleaſure upon us at the review of our good actions, to inſpirit anew, and heighten the quickneſs and life of the Body, and to make it go on eaſily and with pleaſure, becauſe we have both theſe advantages on our ſide, we are obliged on a double account, not only to exerciſe acts of Compaſſion and Goodneſs, but to make a mighty advance in them. When wiſe Men adviſe how to make a Progreſs in any Science, or Art, or Calling, they often conſider and ſtudy the genius and tendency of the Man's temper, that they may apply him to that which he is moſt ſtrongly byaſs'd and inclin'd to, not doubting but that he will go on more ſmoothly, when he goes along with the grain of his Nature; the pleaſure he finds in following his own fancy and humour, makes him apply more cloſely, and the difficulties he meets with, do but whet his deſire, and make him purſue his Buſineſs with more appetite and keenneſs than before; and this is ſuch an advantage as a Man would wiſh for, to attain to a dexterity and perfection in any thing: Since therefore we have theſe Advantages and Inclinations rooted in our Natures, not only as we are Men, and endued with Reaſon, but as meer Animals; how ſtrongly are acts of Mercy and compaſſion enforc'd upon us; nay what a mighty proficiency may juſtly be expected from us herein; and therefore if we do violence to theſe Principles, if we ſo deprave our native tenderneſs, (and not only come ſhort of that perfection that may be hoped for from theſe of our Talent) and which is yet lower, not go one ſtep or degree towards it; but which is worſt of all, if we have ſo corrupted our own Natures, that we have acted counter to theſe Principles, and have hardned and contracted our Hearts ſo, that

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our ſelves or a few more have engroſs'd all our kindneſs and affection; when our covetous and penurious temper takes off from that univerſal tenderneſs we were born with, and not only ſo, but which was farther recommended to us by our common Reaſon: When the Seed ſown in good Ground, is choakt up by Thorns and Bryars, and the Cares of this World, when we not only omit doing good to others, but do ſuffer and commit many acts of Unkindneſs and Oppreſſion upon them, and are fruitful of Tares inſtead of that wholſom Grain which the Divine Husbandman had planted in our Natures; when we do all this, we are liable to a complicated Guilt, to many Guilts comprized in that one, of dealing unkindly by another; for 'tis an offence not to go on by the ſpring and good tendency of our lower Nature; and when the reflections of right Reaſon do carry us farther, and are a new incitement to us, 'tis an offence of an higher nature, but when we do not only offer our ſelves this violence, when we not only omit acts of kindneſs and compaſſion, but commit their very contraries, we arrive at an high ſtrain and pitch indeed, and this laſt is comprehenſive of the two former, and has beſides a ſpecial Malignity ſuperadded. That ſaying of *Nero* in the beginning of his Reign, e're his tenderneſs was perverted, is remarkable. *I ſearch*, ſaith he, *every where for ſome object worthy my Liberality, I take pity on the Poverty of one, I encourage the Merits of another, the Youth of one, and the old Age of another, and if I find a miſerable Creature that deſerves not to be holpen, I conſider my ſelf in his Perſon, and I ſolace my ſelf in ſolacing him, ſo that there is no body I would not do good to, on the account of his being a Man, and yet this Idolater had not the Motives we have to perſwade him to this Duty, he knew not that eternal Inheritance promiſed in* lieu *of that periſhing Portion we exchange for it.* And now I have made it ſufficiently appear, that our Reaſon as well as very Frame and Conſtitution, obliges us to be tender, compaſſionate and kind to others: But if we look yet farther,

and consult *Thirdly*, Holy Writ, how closely, how inexcuseably is the duty of Compassion and Charity tied upon us! 'Tis enforc'd upon us with all the earnestness and vehemence possible; we are allured and excited to it by sweet perswasives and endearing promises; and least we should not be drawn by the Cords of a Man, lest we should become insidious to our selves, and countermine our own Happiness, lest there should be base and ungenerous Men, that would not be drawn by the disinteress'd love and kindness of God, and the prospect of an undeserv'd mighty reward, God endeavours to lay an Holy force, and a kind of necessity upon them, he would awaken these by threats and menaces, assuring them that the Unmerciful shall receive no Mercy, and thus he stirs them up by hopes and fears, the Springs of Humane Actions.

Sacred Writ does thus press Charity upon us with that holy Warmth, that plainly shews the great Value of this Grace; our good Works are there made the characteristick and mark of our Christianity and Discipleship; as if our Initiation in Baptism, by which we have a Right to the external Priviledges of the Church, were not to be nam'd when compar'd with these; there is such a stress laid on it in the Gospel, that it seems to intimate, That the whole Process of the day of Judgment shall be grounded on this one Grace of Charity, and truly it is so recommended, that perhaps it is not altogether unnecessary to Observe, That, as the Moralists, as well as Divines agree, that the Virtues are connected and joyn'd together, so should the Graces go hand in hand; and as you may read it in the 2d Epistle of St. *Peter* chap 1. *That we should give all diligence to add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to tempeannce patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity:* Here Charity finishes the Catalogue, and crowns the rest. And by *Moses* 'tis made the sum of the Old Law, as 'tis by Christ made

made the ſum of the New: the price and value of this Grace may ariſe, in a great meaſure from hence, That it gives occaſion to, and is productive of ſeveral other Virtues; it gives an Opportunity to the Poor that are reliev'd, not only to pray, but to praiſe God for their Benefactors. An act of Charity ſeems alſo to be an act of Faith and relyance on the Promiſes; 'tis laying down what is certain, and in our power, for ſomewhat at a diſtance, and in the dark, whereof we have no other aſſurance, but that which is founded on the veracity of God, which dependance on his Word, and ſubmiſſion to his Will, without any farther Evidence, muſt needs be very acceptable and well-pleaſing to him.

And when we conſider *Fourthly*, That God himſelf came down from Heaven, out of pure Love and Charity, to give us this new Commandment; and as he was infinitely perfect and infinitely deſirable from all Eternity, no acceſſion of Happineſs could accrue to him, that he had not in his own Boſom before, his own unbounded Nature and Eſſence, containing all the the Variety that can be enjoy'd to all Eternity, it being the nature of Infinity never to be Exhauſted; when we conſider this, and that it muſt be the diffuſiveneſs of his Goodneſs, and his diſintereſs'd Love to us, that induc'd him to condeſcend to wear our poor dreſs of Fleſh and Blood, and to teach us familiarly in our own Nature, by his own Example and ocular Demonſtration, which is the plaineſt way of Inſtruction; to go about to do good as he did, how much moreforcibly does this preſs the exerciſe of Charity upon us? And to refine upon this Duty to the laſt degree, he not only forgave his Enemies, but did them good, and pray'd for them at his very Death; and his Death and Paſſion was deſign'd for their Welfare and Happineſs; and he fell like that Tree that affords Balm to Cure the Wounds of thoſe that cut it down: And when this great light diſappear'd, he left Apoſtles, Martyrs, Confeſſors, and all good Men, that after the ſetting of this Sun, ſhould ſhine like Stars in the Firma-

ment, to enlighten and direct our Paths, by their Instruction and Example; and this brings me to shew,

Secondly, How advantagious and necessary it is, That persons of Rank and Quality, and Fortune should distinguish themselves in this respect.

Liberality is a quality that shews that largeness of Soul, and clearness of Spirit, that is essential to a truly Generous and Noble Person; 'tis by this Temper of Mind that a Man shews himself the Master, and not the Slave of what he possesses; and by holy aspiring after Goodness and Perfection, he gets above himself, makes some approaches and is allied to Divinity: For, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* Remarks, *A Man doing Good is the Image of God, he carries in his Person the Character of the Divinity, for he imitates the greatest and the noblest of the Divine Attributes, that is Mercy and Liberality*; and can any thing reflect a greater honour or lustre on a Man, than thus to aspire and gasp after Goodness, to take such flights towards Heaven, and to perfect his Nature? Persons of Rank and Quality, and Fortune, should be a mighty defence and protection, not only to the Poor and Distress'd, but also to the Injur'd and Oppress'd, they should by the interposeal of their Authority and Credit, ward off, as much as possible, the Violence, and check the Insults and Insolence of wicked Men; and 'tis the best Argument of a greatness of Mind and true Honour, to descend to, and comply with the low Estate of the Poor, to lay by that Pomp and stiffness of Deportment, that as it keeps them at an awful distance, does quite unqualify them for that Familiarity that is necessary to let a Man into their secret Wants and Exigencies; affability, condescention, and obligingness of Humour, are the best marks of an high and exalted Mind, and that disposition and suppleness of Temper that carries a Man to be a Succour to the Afflicted, and to descend to their lowliness and condition, is found to be the most Erect, the least capable of bearing Affronts or

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Inſolence, and is the moſt ready to ſpring againſt Inſults and Oppreſſion; the Complexion and Temper of ſuch Men are ſo uncorrupt, ſo tender, and ſo much in the primitive ſtate and purity, that they cannot bear the Wrongs that are oppreſſive of Human Nature, and men that ſignaliz'd themſelves in this reſpect, were in the Old World Deify'd and rank'd in the number of Heroes, and diſtinguiſhing Marks of Honour were awarded for them, as for thoſe that deſerv'd beſt of Human Nature; and this Honour and profound Reſpect was paid to the Memory of thoſe Worthies: There is an outward Reſpect and Ceremony due to the Rank and Quality of a Man, which men ſtudy to pay too officiouſly to the Living, whether deſerving or no, perhaps imagining that every ſuch act muſt pleaſe, becauſe it ſeems to ſuppoſe a Worth anſwerable: tho' perhaps theſe men only diſcern a weakneſs in Great Men, by the means whereof they endeavour to wind themſelves into their Favour: But theſe Men that deſerve ſo well of the Publick, have the real Eſteem of the Heart, which puts forth theſe external Ceremonies with warmth and affection; ſo that a great and a good Man may have mighty Opportunities of doing good, people are byaſs'd to receive his Dictates, and to be led by him without a nice enquiry into, and examination of his Actions: Virtue and Goodneſs are ſo becoming and faſhionable, eſpecially when worn by Great Men, that we are very ready to conform our ſelves to them; they lend Piety ſome Ornaments and Luſtre, that other Men have an ambition and curioſity to wear and Mimick; and truly, habits of Virtue, like fine Cloaths upon a right and well ſhap'd Body, ſit gracefully upon an erect and goodly Mind, and are very decent and becoming: And ſuch great Examples and ſhining Lights carry ſome authority and power to direct our Paths, which Authority we are inclin'd to follow, and to pay a natural ſubmiſſion to; and the Rhetorick and Eloquence of their Actions, perſwade more forcibly than that of their Words and Diſcourſes;

either

either becauſe it diſcovers ſome new Beauty in Virtue, or teaches the Practice more plainly, or that it ſmooths and ſweetens the Difficulties of it; whether or no theſe altogether, or any of them, is the cauſe of the great power and efficacy of Examples, this is certain, That Learning by Examples is moſt compendious and lively, and that Inſtruction by Rule and Diſcourſes, is tedious and ſlow: He that exhorts to, and diſplays Virtue in its due Colours, muſt lay out a great deal of time and diſcourſe in deſcribing its Nature and Beauty, and to inſpire the Practice of it; but if he lays this plain to the Eye, if he practiſes himſelf what he Taught before, he muſt ſmooth the way, and clear his Doctrine wonderfully, and he will perform incomparably more by his Example, than by all his Reaſoning.

A Man may underſtand the Art of *Painting* much eaſier and better, if he ſee the Artiſt handle his Pencil, and lay his Colours, and draw the Lines, than if he had taken pains to inſtruct him in the Rules, and to diſcover the Secrets of it; we have all that Inclination to imitation and Mimickry, and Examples move and inſinuate themſelves with ſuch ſecret Charms and Attractions, that we find by Experience, that we cannot well reſiſt the power and virtue of them, and we begin to act the ſame things by pure habit and familiarity, without reflection or thought; and living Examples have a Life or Spirit, or whatever you call it, which we deſire to Rival and come up to, and which is beyond the Art of Rhetorick or Painter to ſet forth in due and lively Colours; And beſides, the dulleſt Spectator has the advantage to underſtand the broad Language of Actions and Examples, when he may be at a loſs to trace and diſcern the Thread of a fine and goodly Diſcourſe; and when he ſees the Actions of Men anſwer and keep cloſe to the warmth of their Words and Language, then is he eaſily induc'd to believe their conviction and ſincerity, and the perſwaſion they have of the Truth of what they offer; and truly, if we take the Picture from

from the Original, when we copy all the living charms and lovelineſs from living Examples, that repreſent the Beauties of Virtue in moſt decent and graceful motion and carriage, they animate it with that ſpirit and warmth that makes it look Natural, then Virtue walks in our own Dreſs, and ſo lays a more lively and deeper impreſſion upon us, and recommends it ſelf in its moſt endearing comlineſs, and agreeable geſtures; but Virtue drawn from Precepts and Diſcourſes is a tranſcript and copy, the ſtatue and picture of a living Example, and is languid for want of that air, and life and motion that inſpirits the former; and in a word, Virtue in Example does much more charmingly endear it ſelf, than the moſt Rhetorical Deſcriptions of it, and is as much above the moſt lively Diſcourſe and finiſh't Panegyrick upon it, as the Creator is above the Painter, or Nature and the Original above Art and the Picture: Since therefore Examples have all this power and efficacy, and that we have generally a ſecret itch and deſire to ape Grandeur, when we cannot attain to it, how mighty advantagious and neceſſary is it that perſons of Rank and Quality and Fortune ſhould be ſhining Examples, a Spectacle ſet on High, that people may copy after theſe Originals, that ſuch Patterns ſhould be ſet in a true Light, that others may the more advantagiouſly take and draw from them all the Beauties and Features of Virtue and Goodneſs. And if the Nobility and Gentry, and Men of Fortune of our County, degenerate not from the Ancient Glory of their Anceſtors; if the brightneſs of their Examples ſerve not to Illuſtrate our ſhame, what a ſtrong Tye and Obligation have we to out-ſhine others in Religious Duties, in Pious and Charitable Actions? Our County, in *Cæſar*'s time, as Hiſtorians tell us, was accounted the Civileſt among the *Britains*, not Conquer'd, but Compounded with by the *Romans*, and, as if Providence had deſign'd us peculiar Favours, we are ſo ſcituated by Nature, that we ſeem to be planted to receive more, eſpecially the benefit of Commerce

and

and Traffick wtih other Countries: And this conveniency occaſion'd the Importing the richeſt of Commodities, and greateſt Bleſſing, the Chriſtian Religion into our County; the day-Light from on High firſt ſhed it ſelf there, and the light of the Goſpel was cheriſh't and encouraged by *Ethelbert*, King of *Kent*, *Anno* 596. and long before this, *Kent* had receiv'd the Faith; for it is Recorded, That *Lucius* the firſt *Britiſh* King in this Iſland, built a Church to the name and ſervice of Chriſt, within the Caſtle of *Dover*, and plentifully Endow'd the ſame; and if our fore-Fathers had the priviledge to be Witneſſes of the firſt Dawning of the Goſpel, to receive the firſt warmth and ſpringing Light of it? if they did ſo encourage and eſtabliſh the Church; if they built it upon a Rock, againſt which, tho' the Wind roſe and the Waves beat, it was ſafe and unſhaken, becauſe it was well founded; if this was their Priviledge and great Advantage beyond the reſt of this Iſland; and if this their gratitude and return to God for ſuch a peculiar Favour; and if they have devolv'd and entail'd theſe Bleſſings upon us, with new acceſſions of Purity and Advantage to Religion; how deeply are we Indebted? with how many years Intereſt are we incumber'd? and what a Fund and Bank for Piety and Charity are we oblig'd to make, to diſcharge the Dues and Arrears owing from us, for the primitive Purity and increaſe of the Goſpel Light among us? and if the Saints above, our Pious Predeceſſors, the Founders and Patrons of Chriſtianity in our County, have any ſenſe of what we are doing this day; if they are made Privy to or concern'd at the behaviour of us their Friends and Country-Men here below; or, if (as ſome are of Opinion) according to the Influence of their good and bad Works, the departed feel an increaſe or abatement of Joy or Torment in the other World; then what a new acceſſion of Happineſs and Bliſs, what new Raptures of Joy and delight may we ſuppoſe to break in upon them? and when they riſe up to the higheſt key and top

of

of Heavenly ſatisfaction, what Complacency muſt they then take in the Deſigns and Offices of this Day? And if there be Joy in Heaven, at the Converſion of a Sinner; Sure there muſt be a more Intenſe, a more rais'd Sublime delight at the improvement of Virtue, when Perſons meet to ſet their Heads together, and contrive to do good, when ſo many great and good Men join themſelves in Holy Confederacies, to project and deviſe Liberal things, to caſt about how to be always doing good, how to make their Charity moſt laſting; and moſt uſeful, and this leads me to ſhew

Thirdly, What a great Improvement of the Grace of Charity it is to enter into Societies, for the deviſing of Liberal things.

If the univerſal diſpoſition of every ſingle Man to do good to all Men, and the ſhining example of each great Perſon in his private Capacity, be ſo commendable in this reſpect as I have repreſented to you, what a mighty improvement of Charity muſt it be, to Unite into Artificial Bodies and Societies, not only to give new ſtrength and power, but alſo a ſort of Immortality and Perpetuity to this Grace among us: The Original Inſtitution and deſign of Civil Bodies began from the exigencies and neceſſities of private Men, their divided power was too ſlight and feeble to defend or promote their own or the common good, and at beſt there was this defect in the ſtate of Nature, that altho' one Man might have followed the light and direction of right Reaſon, and might have acted according to the Law Impreſs'd and Engra[illegible] on his Mind, yet his rectitude and equity were ſubject to Mortality, and no Man could promiſe himſelf that his next Heir or Succeſſor ſhould not ſwerve from this Law, or that he ſhould not invade the Right and Priviledge of another: But Bodies Politick do provide againſt theſe flaws and deficiencies, they are Deathleſs and Perpetual, and if a Branch chance to be Lopt off, there ſprouts up another in its room,

and there is a continual ſupply of Mortality, the Vital heat and warmth continues, and the Heart is ſuppoſ'd to be ſtill ſound and free from Change and Diſeaſe, and from Death it ſelf; and therefore when People make Holy Leagues and Confederacies, and reinforce and ſtrengthen their Charity by their United Power; and by Cuſtom and Example, at leaſt enjoin and entail this equally with their Eſtate, upon Poſterity, they procure a laſting Duration, and a ſort of Eternity to it; And ſince ſuch Communities are as one Body inſpir'd and mov'd by the ſame Life, ſince they breath the ſame Spirit of Love and Amity, and if general and publick Judgments and Calamities purſue general and publick Vices in a Country or Nation, as 'tis obſerv'd they always do, how do ſuch Bodies of Men, not only Enſure the Community, but alſo ſtand in the Gap, and procure Bleſſings to a Country and People? their Virtues will very perſwaſively expoſtulate with God, and ſo many Righteous Men are ſufficient to attone for, and to ward off Wengeance from a Nation.

But beſide this laſting advantage of entring into Societies, for the deviſing of Liberal things for the Body, at all times, and in all places expedient and neceſſary; there is more pecularly in this Age, a preſſing Inducement to perſwade us to enter into Holy Alliances and Confederacies, for the deviſing of Liberal things for the Soul too.

Atheiſm, Irreligion and Prophaneneſs are openly avow'd and profeſs'd; and Men Ambitious of ſurprizing the World, with ſomewhat that is daring or new, or uncommon, deſire to be noted and obſerv'd; and endeavour to ſignalize themſelves by Singularity, and laying memorable Impreſſions on their Hearers; this is the common Topick of Men of Pride and Haughtineſs of Spirit, they break out into ſome flaſhy Jeſts, and ſtudy to dazle by the ſprightlineſs of their Wit and Fancy on this occaſion: They are always upon new Enquiries, and for having their Phœnomena's in Religion laid

laid before the Company, that they may have ſome opportunity to ſhew their Ingenuity, to convince them of the clearneſs of their Senſes, and the penetration of their Judgment; that they may let them underſtand that they have diſcover'd that long hidden Fallacy of Religion, that they have lookt thro' the deceitful Miſtery, and by a particular acuteneſs of Spirit, found out the Politick Cheat, and penetrated the laſt and abſtruſeſt receſſes of it: And in a word, that they are Wiſer than the greateſt Men of this Age, and all that went before it; and theſe ſort of Men have got to ſuch a head, and are grown ſo numerous, that they draw up into Parties, and uſe all their Skill and Diſcipline to attack us openly; and when they meet ſome of little Learning, and mean Capacity, ſcatter'd and unprovided, they ſeldom loſe the opportunity of ſetting upon ſuch unequal Matches, with Shew and Solemnity, and of plying them vigorouſly, till by their weakneſs they have obtain'd the Victory, in which they Glory and Inſult with Inſolence and Clamor, which ſufficiently convinces, that their deſign is only to Triumph in their own Abilities, and like Mountebanks on a Stage, to raiſe Trophies of their own Conduct and Capacities: But ſince many of theſe Men are otherwiſe, Perſons that generally make ſome Figure in the World, and ſuch as the ſprightlineſs of their Blood and Youth, as well as their Fortune and Education have flushed to fly at ſome things above the common level, ſuch who upon the account of their Birth or Station deſerve ſome Deference, and who are therefore ſufficient to gain ſome Reputation and Modiſhneſs to Irreligion and Prophaneneſs; I think it highly neceſſary, that Men of Rank and Quality, of Faſhion and Authority ſhould muſter their United Forces, ſhould Marſhal and Diſcipline, and draw them up to receive and repulſe ſo pernicious an Enemy; and when we are thus prepared to Encounter our Enemy, when we are thus begirt with the Armour of Righteouſneſs, the Courage and Countenance of our Enemy will

be ready to fall by our forwardneſs; and when they find their number and quality inferior to us, 'twill quite break their expectation and meaſures; and when we ſhall have thus, like the true Church Militant, ſhock't and diſcomfited our Enemies, let us always uſe the Victory with moderation and temper, let not the Conqueſt be ſhewy and vain, leſt they rally their Forces, and return out of regret and revenge to their old Opinions: But above all, let it be provided that our Adverſaries have it fairly hinted and preſs'd upon them, and let our Actions convince the Truth of it, That the Principle by which we are acted, is that of true Love and hearty Affection to Mankind; and when we have thus reduc'd our Enemy to ſome Reaſon, when we have ſweetn'd and calm'd him by our eaſy carriage and candor to him, it may not be unſeaſonable to model and diſpoſe him to receive our Impreſſions, and ſo by our kind conduct and management, to win and engage him to our Party; 'tis a mighty Advantage to gain Number and Credit to an Opinion: It often happens, That when Men of a lower rank and ſphere, and whoſe ſmaller number renders them yet more deſpicable and inſufficient, encounter thoſe of much an higher order and condition, that they are ſomewhat dazled and daſh'd at their ſplendour, they ſink the lower, by a fanciful ſenſe of their own meanneſs, and then grow giddy with looking up at them; hence it is ſometimes, that Men conform themſelves to their Humour, agree to their Sentiments, and out of a ſort of Modeſty and Deference to their number and quality, ſeem to ſubmit to their Judgments and Authority, and ſubſcribe their Opinions, how un-Orthodox ſoever. Since theſe Men of manners, theſe Men of Effeminacy and Cowardize indeed, that dare not follow the Captain of their Salvation, maugre the oppoſition the Pomp of the World can give them, there is need of Quality, Faſhion and Number, to keep ſuch Men in Countenance, to animate them

to

to do their Duty, and to behave themſelves manfully in the face of their Enemy; and to do this perſwaſively, to retrieve and recover the ground and credit that Religion hath lately loſt in the World, 'twill be neceſſary, That Men of Quality, Faſhion and Fortune ſhould eſpouſe her Cauſe warmly, in publick Places and in Company, the common Stages whereon the Adverſaries of it diſplay their vain Philoſophy.

I mean not that Men of Virtue, and ſuch as have a regard for Religion, ſhould force this unſeaſonably, and preſcribe it as an Entertainment to the Company; but I would have them by ſome Intimations of their Mind, and Inclinations at leaſt, beſpeak the good Behaviour of thoſe they Converſe with, and obviate the Affronts that are uſually done to God and Religion, in common Converſation; and what is this, but to *let our light ſhine before men, that they may ſee our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven:* And this is to deviſe Liberal Things for the Souls of Men, to reclaim which, and to miniſter to their moſt diſtreſſed Condition at ſuch a time, is the trueſt Compaſſion, and higheſt degree of Charity we can do them; by which means we ſhall ſtrike in with **His Majeſties late Proclamation againſt Atheiſm, Irreligion and Prophaneſs:** and let the World, to the eternal Honour of our County, ſee we make it our ſtudy to execute aright his Royal Will, and Gracious Directions; and to lend him in this (as we have in every thing elſe) our utmoſt Aſſiſtance in promoting the Glory of God, and the publick Welfare of this Nation: Then can that Complaint never be juſtly made of us, that the Prophet *Iſaiah* makes of thoſe that met to Feaſt together in his time, *That the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe and wind are in their feaſts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither conſider the operation of his hands*, cap. 5. verſe 12.

But

But there remains one principal Advantage of entring into *Societies*, not yet ſpoken to, the bleſſing of mutual Friendſhip: 'tis true, we are enjoyn'd to bear an univerſal love and kindneſs to all Men, and the propenſion of our very Nature leans that way, but though this holy Fire is never to be extinguiſh'd, yet may it burn more fervently, and warm ſome more kindly than others; it ought indeed to have its degrees, it ought to be more intenſe or remiſs, with reſpect to ſome than others: Nature and Alliance, Virtue and Merit claim the greateſt ſhare of our Affections; Prudence and the dictates of right Reaſon, enforce and recommend this more powerfully; Wiſdom and Counſel command us to look about, and to examine whom we admit into our Boſom and Affections, into our Secrets and Favour: But when we have once determin'd our Choice, when Nature and Kindred, Country and Neighbourhood; but above all, Virtue and Deſcent fix our election, then our Love and Friendſhip are laid on a ſure Foundation, we contract much of the expanded and dilated Fire, and it burns more ardently and affectionately within the compaſs of our Friendſhip. Love indeed is the primitive Foundation, and true Cement of all Societies; and when this Fire grew feeble and weak, cool and indifferent in the World, there was a neceſſity to recruit it, and miniſter Fuel to the dying Cynders: 'tis therefore that Laws were made to draw Men into Corporations and Societies, where they might live in dependance, and expect Succours of one another, but theſe are but ſubſidiary helps to repair that Love and Frienſhip ſo much decay'd in the World; and theſe are miſerable ſhifts, which lay a conſtraint upon Men, and do ſecure only the overt-act. But when Friendſhips and Societies are cemented together by Love and Nature, by Virtue and true Election, there Affection becomes regular and ſteady, becauſe the Reaſon on which they are founded, affords conſtant Charms and Attractions:

tractions: And becauſe even this Celeſtial Fire has gone, and may go out again, 'tis not the leaſt important Concern of our preſent Meeting, to ſtir up the old Sparks and Cynders of it, to commence and enter into new Friendſhips, and to cheriſh and inflame the Hearts and Affections of one another; and though our Friendſhip is ſo diſintereſs'd and free, that it has little in view beſide the proſpect of doing good, and enjoying the ſweets and delights of true Amity, yet it is accompanied with other Bleſſings and Advantages; and tho' we feel nothing but pleaſure ſpread over our Hearts, in the company and converſation of our Country-Men and Friends, yet there is ſomewhat elſe of Moment that we lightly paſs over, without obſerving it.

For beſides this Feaſt of the Mind, there is another mighty Advantage ariſing from Friendſhip; 'tis a Guard and a mighty Defence to us too. The Son of *Syrach* tells us, Eccleſ. 6. 14. 16. *That a faithful friend is a ſtrong defence, or medicine of life, and he that findeth him findeth a great treaſure.* And this brings me to ſhew,

Fourthly, and laſtly, The Liberal Man's Reward, *by Liberal things he ſhall ſtand*, or be eſtabliſht; or, in the Goſpel ſenſe, *the merciful ſhall receive mercy.*

The beſt and ſureſt way of eſtabliſhing or ſecuring of any Man or Society, is by engaging the Affections of thoſe in whoſe power it may be to offer Violence to either; this is the method of Nature, this the Primitive Charm whereby it drew Men together, and captivated and united their Hearts: this is it that in in the Primitive ſtate ſuperſeded the uſe of all Laws and Conſtraints; which, as they were compulſive of doing good Offices, as they forc'd and blew up the languid decaying fire of our Love and Affections, took off ſo much from the freedom of the Will, and excellency of the Virtue, on which alone the hap-

happineſs of Men and Societies is founded and eſtabliſh'd; and what more effectual courſe of reſtoring this Law and Virtue to its primitive Excellence and Freedom, than by Liberality and Benificence; the Charms and Attractions of this Virtue are ſo powerful, that the Affections are not only invited and ſweetned, but irreſiſtibly drawn and captivated by them; we lay ſome Debt or Incumbrance on the perſon oblig'd, which Nature is inclin'd to acquit it ſelf of, 'tis a Burthen and Weight, and it ſeems to be in ſome pain till it eaſes it ſelf of the preſſure: Liberty is ſo natural, that we are impell'd by the Springs of our very Conſtitution, to Ranſom and Enfranchiſe our ſelves, by making at leaſt an exchange or return of the Obligation; we are but too ſenſible of anothers right to us, of our own ſlavery and dependance, when he loads us with Obligations and Favours; and we are naturally inclin'd to regain the property of our Selves, and to riſe again to the common Level; and even our very Enemies, by the warmth of our love and kindneſs, by our heaping Coals of fire on their Heads, may have their hard Tempers ſweetly diſpos'd, and ſoftned and melted down: And tho' I could inſiſt longer on this, and evince clearly, and exemplify plainly, That the very animal Nature is diſpoſed and carried on to Acts of Gratitude; yet do I chuſe rather not to tranſgreſs too much on your Patience, but to proceed.

And ſince by Liberality and Benificence, the love and affections of Men, which is the principal Foundation and beſt Security of Societies, are ſweetly engag'd, and that Society and true Friendſhip united in Charity, is as a ſtrong Fort and Cittadel againſt our Enemies. I think it plainly appears, That deviſing *liberal things* is the beſt means and ſureſt method, to ſtand, or be eſtabliſh'd in this World; and ſince I have, in the former part of this Diſcourſe, laid before you the Spiritual Promiſes made to the

the Liberal or Charitable Man, I hope it will no more be doubted, but that he will ſtand or be eſtabliſh'd in the next World too; or, that *the merciful ſhall receive mercy.*

To ſum up all:

You have heard what Liberality is, and what it is to deviſe Liberal Things: you have heard what Obligations, Inſtinct and meer Animal motion, Reaſon, Revelation, and the Example of our Saviour, do lay upon us to be Liberal and Charitable: you have heard how advantagious and neceſſary it is, That perſons of Rank and Quality, of Faſhion and Fortune ſhould diſtinguiſh themſelves in this reſpect; and in a particular manner, what ſtrong Tyes and Oblgations the Nobility, Gentry, and Men of Fortune of our County have to out-ſhine others in Religious Duties, in Pious and Charitable Actions; you have heard what a great Improvement of the Grace of Charity it is to enter into Societies, for the deviſing of Liberal Things, not only as it reſpects the Bodies, but alſo the Souls of Men: you have heard laſtly, the Liberal Mans Reward, how that by Liberal Things he ſhall ſtand, or be eſtabliſh't in this World, and that which is to come.

And this, I doubt not, will be ſufficient to make you ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in *theſe* Works of the Lord: To conclude therefore,

May the honour of God, and benefit of Mankind, be the Spring of all your Actions and Devices.

May your *SOCIETY* long continue an Ornament to our Own, and a ſhining Example to other Counties.

May the Indigent, the Fatherleſs and Widows, find occaſion of Rejoycing from your Chriſtian Entertainment.

May no Exceſs or Intemperance, no Diſcord or Diviſions, give a juſt cauſe of Offence, or occaſion of Interrupting your *Agapæ*, or Feaſts of Love.

May your Entertainment ſerve to Warm your Affections, and to Cheriſh and Raiſe your Friendſhip.

And, as the Wiſe Man hath it, *May you eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart*, Eccleſ. 9. verſe 7.

And, *whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do*, may *all be done to the praiſe and glory of God.*

And, May you all, after a long and innocent Enjoyment of each others *Society* in this World, be Tranſlated to the Bleſſed Company of Juſt Men made Perfect in that which is to come. *Amen.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 3. line 23. read Law and Goſpel. p. 18. l. 18. r. vengeance. ib. l. 23. r. peculiarly. p. 19. l. 3. r. ſenſe. p. 21. l. 32. r. wine. p. 22. l. 17. r. deſert.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

A Sermon Preach'd before their Majeſties K. *William* and Q. *Mary*'s Forces, at *Gant* in *Flanders*, the Sunday before they march'd into the Camp, 1694. By the ſame Author.

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